

The Opposite of Loneliness

I see in stories that neurotypical people get something called “loneliness”.

Apparently they experience a feeling of depression/frustration/yearning kind of thing when they aren't near other humans for a long time or, perhaps, when they are near other humans but have communication problems and feel as though they don't have any friends.

I don't think I've ever experienced the same thing. Or not quite exactly. Maybe the nearest feeling, in my personal experience, to that one would be an absence of any available interesting activities in town.

The town in which I live, the City of Exeter, is very much like other towns and cities across Britain, Europe and the whole world in general insofar as there is always a lack of interesting places to go to and things to do. I mean if we're not sport fans or alcoholics.

For those who are sport fans or alcoholics or members of an intensely devoted religious sect they probably have no problem at all.

They would simply go to the nearest football game or drinking bar or temple of the Gods and spend a few hours watching someone try to score a goal or spend those same few hours getting blotto on beer and wine or, again, spend those hours worshipping whichever God concept they've chosen to believe in.

For the rest of us, the ones without a sport team or an addiction to intoxication or a religious belief system, we are not tremendously provided for in the towns and cities and don't even get me started on how boring the countryside is.

Of course, things used to be much worse before about 1995.

We didn't yet have the World Wide Web. That was the real nightmare. No access to the information systems of the world. It was books which saved us from going completely mad. Thank goodness we had books!

Nevertheless even in today's world there are times when books and the internet and the streaming movie services are not enough. Times when I really desire there to be some sort of place where I could go and be involved in some sort of activity which would be interesting and fun.

I keep trying imagine what that place would be like.

I think of a library combined with a funfair which has solvable puzzles, mazes and interactive art galleries. Maybe a surrealist theme park?

In 1977 The Clash sang “I'm up and down the Westway, in and out the lights
What a great traffic system, it's so bright
I can't think of a better way to spend the night
Than speedin' around underneath the yellow lights”

Certainly some things have changed since 1977 but as I walk through the city streets in the evening I'm still seeing that the main things being offered to the people for their distraction are places to drink alcohol, get blotto and slide under the table to be sick or places to worship an imaginary God or to eat low grade takeaways.

Turn on the radio stream on your mobile device and dead Joe Strummer still sings "Now I'm in the subway and I'm lookin' for the flat
This one leads to this block, this one leads to that
The wind howls through the empty blocks looking for a home
I run through the empty stone because I'm all alone"
And dead John Lennon sings "Keep you doped with religion and sex and TV
And you think you're so clever and classless and free
But you're still fucking peasants as far as I can see
A working class hero is something to be
A working class hero is something to be"
I've thought about this "loneliness" thing which the neurotypical people describe and, as I said before, I don't think I've ever experienced it. That is, unless I'm misunderstanding the meaning of it.

I think I get the opposite of loneliness.

I get a feeling of anxiety and stress when there are other people in the room or in the same vicinity as me.
The anxiety and stress goes away when the people go away.

When there's nobody around I feel happy and able to think and do my work. When a person appears I feel uncomfortable until they go away again.

Nevertheless I still value human interaction as long as it is through some intermediary filter such as art.

People write or draw or paint or create music or other art forms and I enjoy those art forms. Then I become inspired and I write or draw or create something and I post it to the web in the hope that other people will care enough to take some interest.

So there's (1) loneliness, there's (2) the opposite of loneliness and there's (3) this other thing which is the desire for a surrealist theme park library theatre sort of place.

I suppose it's different again for people with an excess of money. They can travel whenever they like.

I need to go travelling again soon.